

Intravenous Fluid Shortage

National Response Group

Meeting Communique 13 January 2025

Latest update

Members of the National Response Group each provided a status update regarding the impact of the IV fluid shortage. A recall of *sodium chloride 0.9% 250mL* from one supplier on 24 December 2024 resulted in short supply of that product. There was sufficient supply of alternative bag sizes to mitigate this and stock of the 250mL bag is expected to return this week. A significant amount of work is still being undertaken at a jurisdictional level and conservation strategies continue to be required to effectively manage supply. Stock available via Section 19A continues to be used to supplement supply.

Updated data modelling for 2025 will be undertaken over the next month to inform the supply for the coming 6 months.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration is progressing work to improve the regulatory framework for medicine shortages and discontinuations. The public consultation proposing to expand the list of reportable medicines and timeframes for reporting discontinuations has closed and submissions are being reviewed.

The Commonwealth Government has undertaken extensive consultation regarding the national shortage of IV fluids. Several recommendations to address the shortage in the medium and long term are currently being considered. These recommendations include proposals to expand local manufacture and review procurement and clinical use IV fluids.

Agreed Outcomes

1. Continue to conserve all IV fluids, particularly ***sodium chloride 0.9% 1000mL, compound sodium lactate (Hartmann's) 1000mL and sodium chloride 0.9% 100mL*** across January.
2. Continue to encourage use of the Sip Til Send protocol for surgical patients. This has been widely adopted and there have been no reported adverse effects to date.
3. Continue to review the need for supplementing supply with overseas-registered products available via section 19A.
4. Continue to report any adverse effects or unintended consequences from conservation strategies to the group.

Background

The National Response Group for the management of the Intravenous Fluid shortage was formed at the request of the Victorian Department of Health Secretary, Professor Euan Wallace and chaired by Professor Andrew Wilson, the Chief Medical Officer in the Victorian Department of Health.

This group includes representatives with executive oversight and procurement leaders from all Australian jurisdictions, clinicians in both the public and private hospital sectors, alongside representatives from community health care and day procedure centre providers, ambulance providers, veterinary practice representatives from the Australian Veterinary Association, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, Australian Medical Association, the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, Advanced Pharmacy Australia and the Commonwealth Government, with engagement and updates from industry representatives.

The National Response Group will continue to monitor the situation, provide responsive information to the health sector and will continue to work alongside key stakeholders to ensure supply and demand are adequately and appropriately managed.